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Q2

(a) The Rules and Regulations provided to all the civil servants are same, yet there is difference in the performance. Positive minded officers are able to interpret the Rules and Regulations in favour of the case and achieve success, whereas negative minded officers are unable to achieve goals by interpreting the same Rules and Regulations against the case. Discuss with illustrations. (b) It is believed that adherence to ethics in human actions would ensure in smooth functioning of an organization/system. If so, what does ethics seek to promote in human life? How do ethical values assist in the resolution of conflicts faced by him in his day-to-day functioning?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · GS IV · 10 marks · Ethics and Human Interface

Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in-human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics - in private and public relationships. Human Values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.

Core demand of the question

- (a) Same rules, different performance: positive-minded officers interpret rules in favour of the case; negative-minded officers interpret the same rules against it. Discuss with illustrations
- (b) What ethics seeks to promote in human life; how ethical values help resolve day-to-day conflicts

Revision summary

Identical rules yield different results because interpretation carries the officer's motive and fear.

A positive reading completes a lawful case; a negative reading manufactures objections.

Positive is not illegal favour; it is the purpose of a beneficial rule.

Ethics promotes right conduct, trust and a life that does not need two ledgers.

Integrity, impartiality, empathy, courage and temperance settle the day's conflicts in one public standard.

Introduction

The statute book is shared. Outcomes are not. Part (a) asks why the same clause becomes a door or a wall. Part (b) asks what ethics is for, and how values settle the small wars of a working day.

Body

(a) Same rules, different performance

- Civil servants are bound by the same Acts, rules, manuals and financial codes. Performance still splits because interpretation is a human act.
- A positive-minded officer reads a beneficial provision as a duty to complete the citizen's case if the legal conditions are met.
- A negative-minded officer reads the same provision as a list of reasons to say no, to protect himself from audit rather than to serve the purpose of the law.
- **Illustration:** a widow's pension. The positive officer helps her obtain the missing death certificate through the lawful channel and sanctions on the day the record is complete. The negative officer returns the file five times for commas and never visits the tehsil that holds the record.
- **Illustration:** disaster relief. The positive officer uses the list and the field visit to include a genuine hut that the survey missed. The negative officer excludes anyone whose name is spelled two ways, while a contractor's ghost hut sails through.
- **Illustration:** Section 4 of the Right to Information Act, 2005. The positive officer publishes suo motu information so that fewer people must beg. The negative officer treats every query as an enemy action.
- **Positive interpretation is not illegal generosity. It is purposive construction:** the object of a welfare or service rule is delivery, not the officer's quiet life.
- Negative interpretation often hides as "strictness". Strictness that applies equally, including against the powerful, is integrity. Strictness only against the poor is bias.
- **Necessary attributes to close the gap:** clarity of purpose, courage before audit panic, empathy, mastery of the actual rule so that a lawful yes is not mistaken for a favour, and leadership that rewards completion rather than the number of objections.
- Digitisation helps when it removes a discretionary no; it fails when a portal is designed so that only the literate can pass.
- Training and supervision must treat a lawful, reasoned yes as professional success. Otherwise the service will keep producing two countries under one manual.

(b) What ethics seeks to promote, and how values resolve daily conflict

- **Ethics seeks to promote right conduct:** honesty, fairness, respect for persons, and responsibility for consequences.
- In human life it aims at a character that can live with others without reducing them to tools, and at institutions that make that character easier than predation.
- It promotes trust. A family, a firm or a secretariat cannot function if every handshake needs a policeman.
- **It promotes inner coherence:** the person does not have to keep two ledgers, one for the public and one for the self.
- Day-to-day conflict is usually between duty and convenience, truth and loyalty, speed and fairness, self and the weaker other.
- **Integrity resolves the gift-versus-file conflict:** the gift is refused because the file is not for sale.
- **Impartiality resolves the kin-versus-stranger conflict:** the counter does not ask whose child you are.
- **Empathy and justice together resolve the angry crowd versus the lonely accused:** the officer hears both and still applies the same law.

- **Courage resolves the oral illegal order versus the written rule:** the refusal is recorded, not performed as theatre.
- **Temperance resolves the urge to humiliate a subordinate after a bad meeting:** the work still needs that person tomorrow.
- An organisation implements this by a code that is used, example from the head, channels for dissent, and punishment that is real. Ethics is not a poster in the lift.

Flow diagram

Same rules -> Purposive yes
Same rules -> Defensive no
Purposive yes -> Delivery
Defensive no -> Citizen blocked
Ethics -> Trust and character
Integrity impartiality empathy -> Daily conflicts

Conclusion

The same rule becomes delivery or denial according to the officer's purpose, courage and empathy. Ethics seeks honest, fair, responsible life together. Values such as integrity and impartiality are how a working day of conflicts is settled without a second, hidden law.

Facts & figures

Purposive interpretation

Indian courts often read welfare and beneficial statutes in the light of their object; an officer may lawfully do the same instead of hunting for a no.

Right to Information Act, 2005, Section 4

Requires suo motu disclosure so that citizens need not beg for what the office already owes.

Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964

Require integrity and devotion to duty; they do not reward an officer for blocking a lawful claim.

Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Ethics in Governance

Argued that codes, values and example must sit inside systems, not only in training-week slogans.

Object of welfare rules

Pension, ration and disaster manuals exist to transfer a benefit to an eligible person, not to display the officer's power to object.